



DUGGAN · LARRAZ · GRACIA





The only surprise is that Herbert hasn't turned up before now. I will pay him one compliment: He has good taste. That's it. Anything remotely interesting about him comes from me. From my work. If I decided to waste my talents and craft a parasitic cockatiel, it would resemble the so-called "High Evolutionary."

-- MR. SINISTER



[x-men_[0.00].....]
[x-men_[0.03].....]
[x-men_alpha.]



Above
Da Nang,
Vietnam.

S.W.O.R.D. Station
One to the
X-Men...
...it's gonna
be one of those
days.

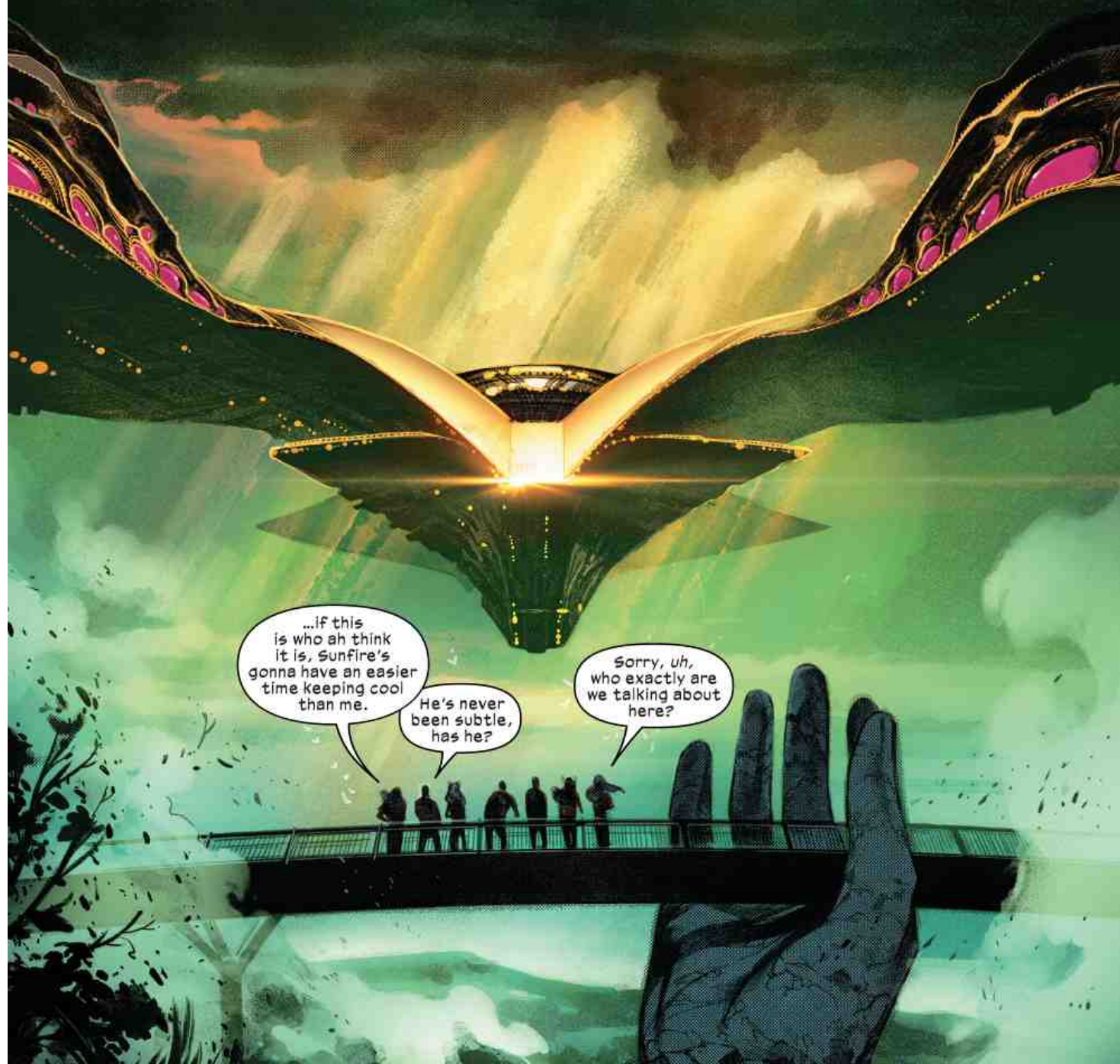
They came
out of the sun--
that's why we didn't catch
them inbound. Want
reinforcements?



We'll let
you know,
Brand.

So far,
the Earth is still
spinning.

Ah
gotta warn
you...



...if this
is who ah think
it is, Sunfire's
gonna have an easier
time keeping cool
than me.

He's never
been subtle,
has he?

Sorry, uh,
who exactly are
we talking about
here?



The High
Evolutionary bidsss you
greetingsss!

He has
witnessed
you.

The birth
of Arakko is a
great leap forward
in your evolution--like
a cell replicating,
what was one is
now two.

I come
in peace
as a friend
to mutantdom to
commemorate
this momentous
occasion.

I dunno,
boss. These guys
vibe trouble.

Bow your
heads to honor his
greatness, mutants!

That's not
on today's menu,
friend.

If Arakko
is on your
mind, you're on
the wrong
planet.



Arakko is the achievement of *this* world, is it not? And its birth has caused dominoes to fall in places that are beyond your sight.

Forgive me. I've been rude.

Allow me to introduce my daughter, *Luminous*. You have not met her... Oh...except for you, Rogue.

We bear a gift for mutantdom.

Each of my father's ships carries a nihilism sphere.



Looks cool, but what's it do?

You can stop right there. Whatever it is--we don't want it!



The Anthropocene era has commenced on this world.

Humanity is the primary engine of change on the climate.

Their ecosystem is collapsing. Accept my gift, and the last days of humanity might even be...pleasant for them.

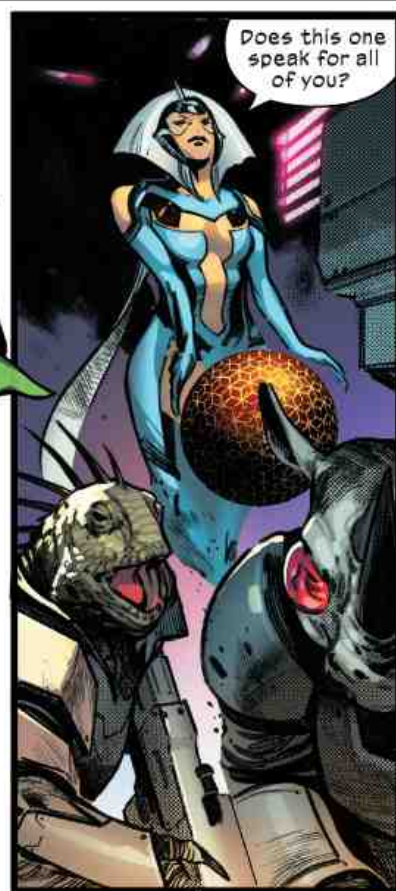
Or reject my gift, and the humans can starve as climate refugees in the decades to come.

The virus within the spheres will sterilize humanity, and within a generation, your human problem will simply...cease to be.



Perhaps some of them will become posthuman, and I can help them achieve their full potential.

Like I helped you, Rogue. When I--







X-MEN

[X_03]

EVOLUTIONARY PRESSURE

The newly elected X-Men find themselves thrust right into the thick of things as they faced off against the Annihilation Wave that made landfall in Kansas. While the X-Men were able to use their combined combat skills and mutant powers to handily deal with the invaders, elsewhere in the universe, patrons of Cordyceps Jones' deep space casino are lined up, competing to wipe humanity off the face of the planet!

Meanwhile on Earth, Dr. Stasis of Orchis, has managed to get his hands on an autopsy report of Cyclops from a recent assault on Orchis' Mother Mold facility...the implications of which promise to rock the X-Men to their core.



Cyclops



Jean Grey



Sunfire



Synch



Wolverine



Polaris



Rogue

[ISSUE THREE] FEARLESS, CHAPTER THREE:
..... "PROBLEMATIC FAN"

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X-MEN CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

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FOR
COUNTER-
EARTH!

BI-SON
returns to Earth
a god!

TESLELEPHANT
REMEMBERS EARTH'S
MISTREATMENT OF
ELEPHANTS--AND
TESLA!

The
X-Men love
elephants!

Cyclops!



Rogue, Polaris--
stay on Luminous.
She has the powers of
both the Scarlet Witch
and Quicksilver, so
work together--and
work fast!



Wolverine
and I will flank
the bomb. What
do you need,
Jean?



The High
Evolutionary's mind
is psi-shielded, but we
can assume he's telling
the truth. He certainly
has the technical ability.
If the virus hits the
air, we need
a plan.



I'm synched
with Sunfire. If the
virus hits the wind, we
can burn it out
of the air.

If we
can move people
away. Synch and I
are engaging.



I admire
the ambition.
You claim one planet,
and not long after,
you take
another.



I like
that.



Now show
me you're
worthy of my
help.

AUCH!



I thought
Rogue's ability
to mimic mutant
powers was
impressive--



--but
you are
more powerful
by no small
magnitude.



SUNFIRE!

Shiro and I aren't doing so hot. How's everybody else?

Eh. Hanging in.

Jean, you have incoming!



TSK.
Let it go,
woman. You're just
prolonging their suffering.
And why? So you can enjoy
these performative
displays of "saving"
them?



AAH!

Shush. It's
time for some
Earth science.
Let's talk about
magnetism.
I can--



Wait--what's
happening?!

I am
happening. Lorna Dane.
Daughter of the great
Magneto...



FWAP

...I thought
you would be...
more.





We have the Omega mutant trapped!

Scott, I'm okay here as long as you keep the High Evolutionary and Luminous back--but do you think we may need the other War Captains?



Guys-- I grabbed 'em.

You've saved one of your friends--



UGHN!

--now watch as I take all the rest down.



Nah...





...I was talking about grabbing your powers.

Pack this up, High Evolutionary.

Or you face the X-Men-- and your greatest weapon.



Well done!



This isn't an empty threat.

Call off your attack. I can do what Luminous does--and I won't be afraid to do what must be done!



Except that I can simply nullify my gifts to her... and your theft of them.

Fear not. I will not punish you harshly.

Evolutionary Guard, stand down.



This is--
ugh--your lucky
day, gentlemen.
I had you right
where I wanted
you.



I will withdraw with my
gift--humanity will simply
have to suffer--and I
will forgive the
aggression visited
upon my host...

...in
return
for his
blood.



you can have
all the blood
you want--

--when you're
standing over my
dead body.

Wait.

SWIFT



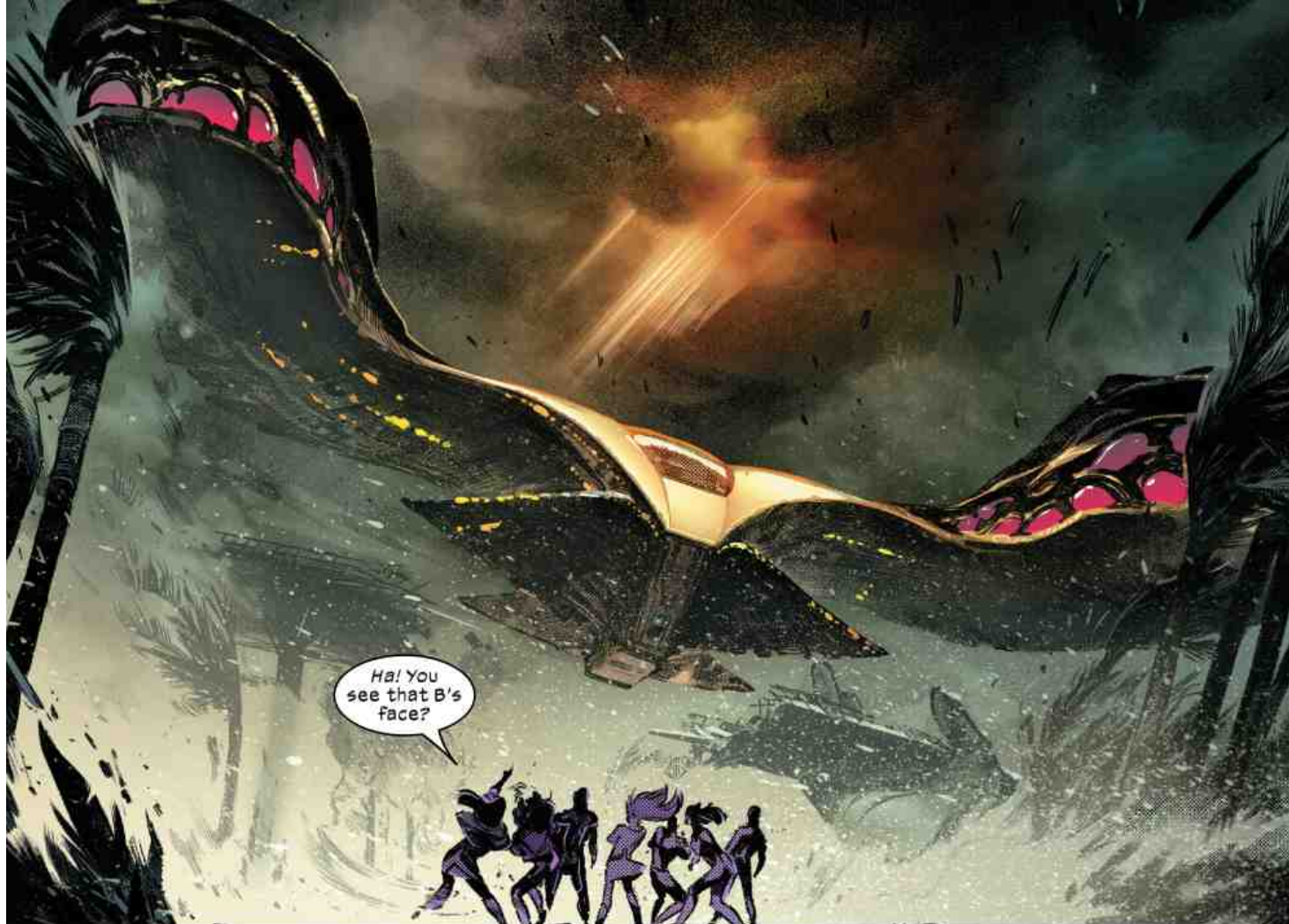
If
it will end
this...



...then he
gets one drop
of blood.







Ha! You see that B's face?



You think I made a mistake?

No. You saved the most amount of lives you could in one swing.

And that's the job.



And what if my blood comes back to haunt us?

Ha!

First time with High Evolutionary, huh?

Oh, today will blow back on us.

Don't worry. And when it does, the X-Men will win then too.

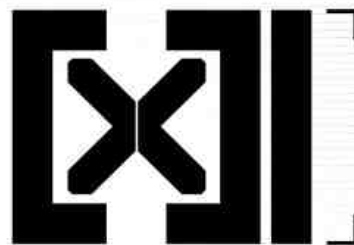
<Thank you so much! We love the Avengers!>

*Translated from Vietnamese.



Please stay and eat with us.

We would love to.



Do you
see, Jean Grey?
The games they
play?

I do...
and what does
the High Evolutionary
want in return for
this illuminating
conversation?

Collaboration.
You inherited the
Earth. The humans are
done. They set themselves on
fire. I am but a mercy, but you
are of this world, and I am
not. It makes no difference
to me how their
story ends.

We reject
that. It's not
too late for any of
us. Why are you
helping us?

Set the
plight of humanity
aside. Mutantdom...
is just getting
interesting. We can
collaborate.

You're getting
bigger and bigger,
but you're not preparing
for the small scale
of the next
conflict.

And what are
we getting wrong,
Herbert?

Ha.

That was
a lifetime ago.
You can relate,
right, Jean
Grey?



You're extremely
intelligent, so you
understand why I find the
idea of Gameworld
offensive.

It judges
every world the
same, without
context.

If I discover
a planet of majestic
ponies, I would not throw
a meteor at it--I would send
packs of wolves, and eventually
the most beautiful ponies
would transform into
radiant survivors.

And the
mushroom in a
spacesuit?

Cordyceps
Jones can be many
at once.

Gameworld
was the natural
progression
of Mojoworld, but he
initiated a hostile
takeover.

Farewell,
Jean Grey. You
will see things
my way later.





I'll be blunt, Feilong.

We would like for you to continue to Mars.



And... just who is "we," Mr. Gyrich?

Is Orchis such a secret that you will not say its name?

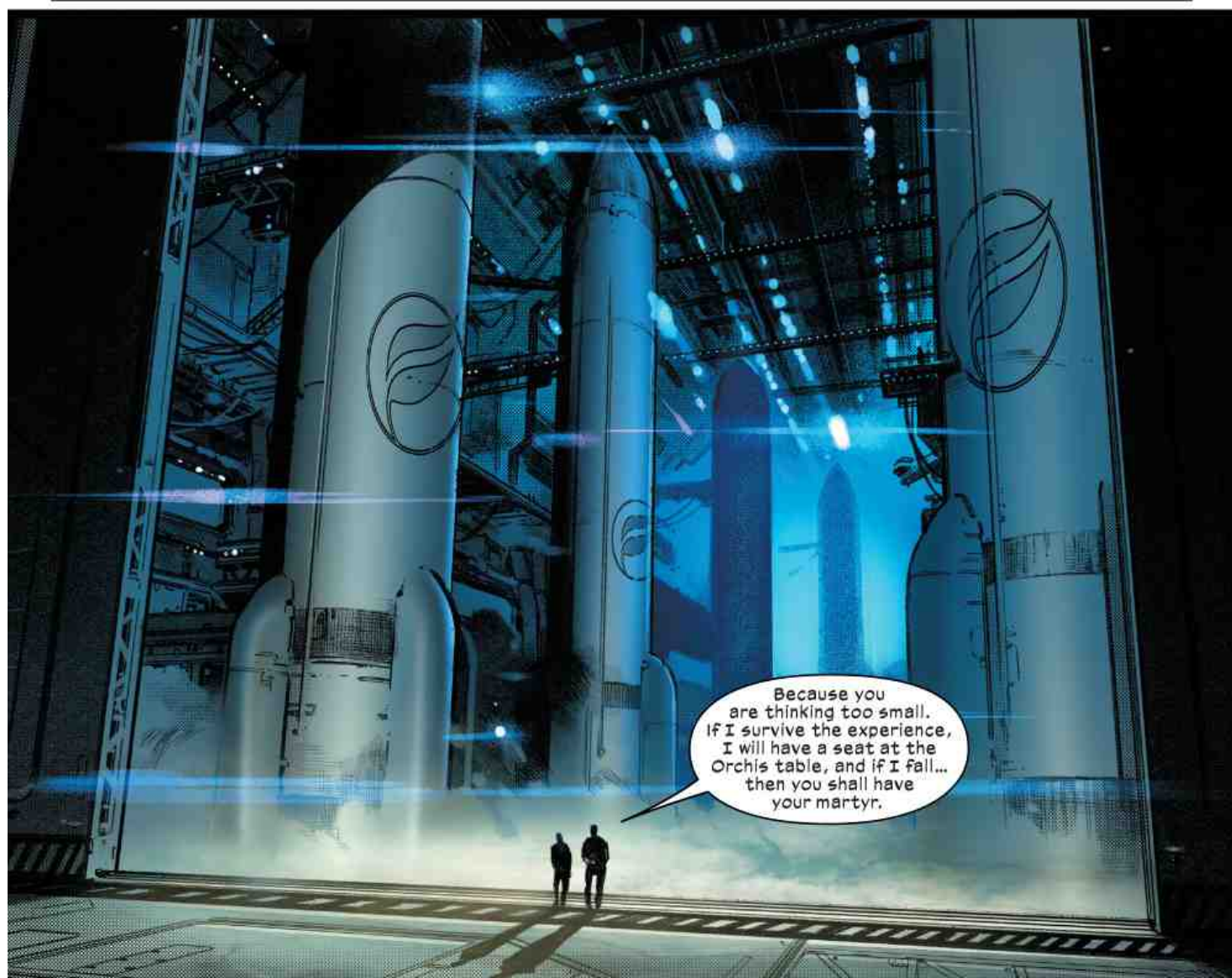
Ha. I should have known you would know all about us. We need skin in the game. Human skin. Up on Mars. We need a foothold.



You think you know what you need.

Do you think me a fool? You would love a famous human corpse to drape in front of Earth.

If that's a "no," why are you still fueling your rocket fleet?



Because you are thinking too small. If I survive the experience, I will have a seat at the Orchis table, and if I fall... then you shall have your martyr.

Coney Island.

You're late.

The X-Men have a lot of enemies, Mr. Stasis. Whatever ax you have to grind with them, if it's not in the public interest to know, it's none of my business.

It's Doctor, Mr. Urich, and I think you mistake me for the common rabble that enjoys donnybrooks with the X-Men.

I'm a bird of a different feather, and you and I, we have but one life to live.

Back when the U.S. government loaned the services of a Super-Soldier to the Kingpin--what did you do?

I told the truth.

Tell it again.

You've already got the story, it's just bigger than you think it is.

My god...



You'll notice the date of the autopsy is not that long ago.



And yet I observed you at the Treehouse...



...with Scott Summers just a few days ago.



Cyclops was right.



You are a very good writer.



I look forward to reading about mutant resurrection in the *Daily Bugle*.

Next: *Nightmare in the Treehouse.*



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	WOLVERINE #16

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[World_of_X [00.00]_X]
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